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The role of content and language in content and language integrated learning (CLIL) at university: Challenges and implications for ESP

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Abstract

In a context characterized by the increasing presence of CLIL programs in universities with a tradition of ESP courses, we analyze the case of a university in Catalonia (Spain) with regard to the position of CLIL and ESP. As CLIL programs are promoted to improve students' language proficiency in English, we explore the importance of language learning in these programs and the implications derived for ESP. Data were obtained from institutional documentation, CLIL class observation, and lecturer and student views on CLIL expressed in focus groups and a questionnaire. Findings show imprecise guidelines for CLIL implementation. Although we can observe an institutional shift from ESP to CLIL, the latter courses do not generally include language support. Lecturer and student perspectives provide useful insights for action that can be taken by ESP course designers to adapt courses to make them more relevant to students' discipline-related needs. Faced with these findings, we propose engaging in collaboration with content lecturers to develop graduates' proficiency in English. This collaboration can take place both through the integration of language in content courses and through the integration of content in ESP courses to make them more relevant to disciplines' communicative needs.

Keywords: CLIL; ESP course reappraisal; Faculty collaboration; Content teachers; ESP teachers

1 Research background

There has been growing institutional concern over the past 20–25 years about the importance of the internationalization of universities worldwide, which is connected to the use of English as the language of instruction in non-English speaking countries (Coleman, 2006; Ljosland, 2005). Given this move towards English-taught programs in universities with an ESP tradition, the roles of language and content merit further research, specifically their integration, and the lessons which can be learnt from the ESP perspective to adapt to this new situation.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which has grown in Europe since the 1990s (Dalton-Puffer, 2007), has been defined as “an educational approach where [content] subjects [...] are taught through the medium of a foreign language” to students at all educational levels (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, & Smit, 2010, p. 1). Some approaches stress the dual integrative focus on content and language, taught by subject specialists or team teaching (Greere & Räsänen, 2008). From the US tradition of Content-Based Instruction (CBI), (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989), different levels of integration can be distinguished according to (i) whether content is the primary goal of the course under the sole responsibility of the specialist instructor; (ii) whether or not language learning support is included (sheltered model)  (iii) if there is specific language instruction to support content courses through the collaboration of subject-matter and language specialists (adjunct model), and (iv) if the language instructor uses discipline content to teach language (theme-based), similar to Dudley-Evans and St. John's (1998) “carrier content”. In turn, these authors identify different types of collaboration that range from cooperation to team-teaching. These are not unproblematic, because content lecturers fear that adapting content to English lower-proficiency learners may result in a “watering down of the content”; or language lecturers may regard supporting other disciplines as “eroding their professional career” (Crandall & Kaufman, 2002, p. 3).

In Europe, Greere and Räsänen (2008) propose a classification of CLIL courses ranging from the absence of the integration of language and content to full collaboration between language and discipline specialists: (i) the non-integration model (which they term ‘non-CLIL’), involving independent content and language courses (less than 25% of exposure to English in content courses); (ii) the Language for Specific Purposes (LSP)/Discipline Based Language Teaching mode, similar to the theme-based model above (i.e., subject-matter exposure through LSP subjects); (iii) the pre-CLIL model (language/content), which involves LSP courses preparing for content courses (similar to the CBI adjunct model) or content

courses taught through the foreign language; (iv) the adjunct-CLIL model, which tailors language instruction to disciplinary needs, based on the collaboration of language and subject specialists, and (v) the CLIL model which involves the team-teaching of dual programs catering for language and content. This distinction helps in the analysis of CLIL programs in terms of language and content and the roles played by each.

In an analysis of CLIL and ESP within the Bologna process,² Räisänen and Fortanet-Gómez (2008) have noted an increase in CLIL programs and a decrease in ESP courses in redesigned curricula, as content subjects are being offered instead of ESP subjects. This somewhat dismal picture of ESP further strengthens Swales, Barks, Osterman, and Simpson (2001, p. 455) view of the 'fragility' of ESP at university, as "almost every time there is a change in the senior administration, there will be an increase in ignorance about what it is that we [ESP instructors] do and why it is important". This vulnerability of ESP in CLIL contexts takes us back to Raimes' (1991) notion of the *butter's stance* of language instructors, often being regarded as having a subsidiary role vis-à-vis content instructors.

The integration of content and language is inextricably linked to ESP, and especially EAP, which has expanded in universities worldwide as English has become the dominant language of instruction and research. Some central ESP/EAP issues that have been the objects for debate over the years are relevant to the integration of language and content: (i) subject-specific versus common core EAP materials, which has led to the distinction between English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP), and English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Hyland, 2002); and (ii) the extent of collaboration between EAP and subject-matter specialists. (Hyland, 2012; Melles, Millar, Morton, & Fegan, 2005; Swales et al., 2001).

Sustained interaction between content and language lecturers is not common (Räisänen, 2009), probably due to a traditional lack of interaction between disciplines. However, examples such as Lyster's (2007) *counterbalanced instruction* originally developed in immersion programs for younger learners can serve as models for integrating form-focused instruction into content instruction as can in the ESP context the course described by Foran-Storer (2007) which was based on cooperative learning and the development of soft skills through authentic discipline-related materials.

An experience worth mentioning in detail is Cots and Clemente's (2011) tandem-teaching in which the language instructor was a PhD student researching CLIL. During the three-year project (2005–2008), the content and language instructors worked collaboratively in program design and implementation, and, in the second year, both participated in class teaching. The content instructor was thus furnished with models for classroom interaction so that he could eventually teach the class alone in the last year.

This study³ provides an insight into the implementation of CLIL programs at a Catalan university (Spain) from an ESP perspective. Our main objective is to examine both institutional policies and the practices and views of lecturers and students. More specifically, we look into the role of language learning in CLIL settings from which we make proposals for collaboration between content and ESP lecturers. The article first analyzes the institutional context and then, from a qualitative perspective, presents an analysis of the role and status of CLIL versus ESP in three degree programs, observing content courses in terms of linguistic objectives, language focus in classroom discourse, and participants' perspectives on the relationship between CLIL and language. The insights gained through the analysis of policies, practices and views inform our discussion of how ESP can adapt to these new pedagogic scenarios. This is mainly through proposing new roles for ESP specialists, encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration, and reappraising the position of ESP courses.

1.1 Institutional context

The University of Lleida (UdL), in Catalonia (Spain), is located in a bilingual community with Catalan and Spanish as official languages. Catalan is the language commonly used by the University administration and courses are taught in either Catalan or Spanish. Students have the right to use either language (in class, for papers, and exams) regardless of the language used by the lecturer. As part of internationalization, the institutional language policy aims to move from bilingualism to trilingualism, with the introduction of English. According to the Internationalization Program (2006) all academic and administrative information should be available in English (in addition to Catalan and Spanish) and the foreign language should be used for instruction. English-medium instruction is considered a means of improving students' proficiency in English. CLIL is explicitly mentioned in the UdL white papers, the Executive Teaching Plan (2007) and the Language Policy (2008). The institution also requires students to demonstrate an intermediate level of proficiency in the foreign language (B1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR⁴) before graduation. For this reason, curricula designed under the Bologna Declaration of 1999 must include mechanisms for students to fulfill this language requirement. The Language Policy document sets forth the following mechanisms: taking at least 12 credits of content courses in English; taking 12 credits of ESP/LSP courses; or submitting a bachelor's thesis in the foreign language, among others. This document was updated in 2010 with specific guidelines, namely that students' linguistic production (in content courses or theses written in the FL) should be assessed and that a language expert could be called in.

These institutional policies should be regarded from the perspective of the European university reform, as a result of the Bologna Declaration noted above. This reform aimed at promoting mobility and employability through the harmonization of degrees throughout Europe. The creation of the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) and the adoption of a common European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) facilitate transparency and the mutual recognition of studies. These changes have involved the gradual redesign of curricula, a process that culminated at the UdL in 2009–10. Some of the new degrees maintain LSP/ESP courses because of their traditional presence over the years (Nursing, Business and Teacher Training), (ii) due to the pressure by the English Department to include an obligatory EAP subject in Arts and Humanities, or (iii) because of the obvious needs in Tourism. Other degrees with a tradition of ESP courses, such as engineering, have replaced ESP courses with content courses taught in English. As can be seen, with the revision of curricula depending to a great extent on stakeholders' pressure, the presence of ESP/LSP courses at the UdL is not guaranteed, a situation similar to other European universities (Räisänen & Fortanet-Gómez, 2008).

2 This study

2.1 Aims and approach

The implementation of CLIL courses at the expense of ESP raises questions related to the collaboration between content and language lecturers, the status of both types of courses, and the development of academic literacy through content-focused discourse. In order to shed light on this issue, this paper analyses CLIL courses in the degrees of Agronomy Engineering, Business, and Law. Within a general qualitative, exploratory approach, this study explores the role assigned to language in CLIL and the implications that can be derived for ESP/EAP, both for proposing collaboration with content lecturers and for adapting ESP/EAP courses. The specific research questions are as follows:

1. What is the status of CLIL and ESP courses in the three degrees?
2. For the CLIL classes observed, are there any expected linguistic outcomes? Are they explicitly mentioned in the course syllabi? Is there an explicit focus on language in classroom discourse? Does participants' language proficiency become an issue in the classes observed?
3. What are lecturers' and students' views on the implementation of CLIL, and the role assigned to language? What are their views on CLIL versus ESP?

2.2 Data and methodology

Following a qualitative approach, this study combines different types of data and methods of analysis through a process of triangulation (e.g., Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Watson-Gegeo, 1988), in order to provide an exploratory account of the context observed, paying attention to participants' views and practices. Accordingly, an inductive approach was adopted by which the categories and topics of discussion were derived from the analysis and interpretation of the data. Data for this research thus include: (i) documents related both to university policy regulation and to specific course syllabi; (ii) observation of CLIL classes; and (iii) lecturers' and students' views on the introduction of English as the medium of instruction. Below is an account of the types of data collected and their focus of analysis.

The documents analyzed included both institutional general white papers regarding language policy (Internationalization Plan, Executive Teaching Plan, Language Policy Plan) and the specific course syllabi for courses observed.

The three degrees (Agronomy Engineering, Business and Law) were selected because they offered CLIL classes during the academic year when the data were collected (2009–2010). In Agronomy Engineering, there had been previous collaboration between the content and language experts (Cots & Clemente, 2011); in the Business degree CLIL had recently been implemented, in a context with a strong presence of ESP, whereas in Law there had not traditionally been any ESP courses.

The classroom data come from the following subjects: *New Technologies in Food Industry* (henceforth, *Agronomy*) from Agronomy Engineering; *Accounting, Planning and Management* (henceforth, *Accounting*) from Business, and *Comparative Introduction to Legal Systems* (henceforth, *Law*) from Law. The information about these subjects was obtained from the course descriptions on the websites, and analyzed for the presence or absence of language content.

A corpus of nine class sessions was collected, (10 h of non-participant observation), through video-recording and transcription, of which four lessons were analyzed for this study (amounting to 5'.5 h): two *Accounting* sessions (by two different lecturers), one *Agronomy session* and one *Law session*. All classes were recorded around mid-term and they were analyzed for: (i) episodes in which language or communication became salient; (ii) language focus (iii) communication breakdowns; and (iv) repaired versus unrepaired language production.

Data on participants' views were collected through focus groups with participants in CLIL. Two separate focus group sessions were held with lecturers only and students only. The lecturers formed mixed groups from different degrees, while the students came from the Agronomy Engineering and the Business degrees. The focus groups followed semi-structured guidelines, by which participants were prompted to discuss multilingualism and internationalization at university. For this study, attention was paid to lecturers' and students' views and experience in CLIL. The sessions were video-recorded and transcribed, amounting to almost four hours of data.

The final source of data was a questionnaire on university internationalization and multilingualism, consisting mostly of closed items distributed among the university community. We analyzed the students' ($n = 745$) and the lecturers' ($n = 69$) questionnaires, focusing on the one open-ended question on CLIL, and we paid attention to the language issues raised by respondents. The open question was the following: "Evaluate the introduction of courses taught in English and French⁵ at UdL through the "Multilingual Plan" (*not language courses, but courses taught in these foreign languages*). In addition to this question, the personal information that preceded the questionnaire was also considered, as it yielded information on respondents' experience in CLIL and/or ESP. As opposed to the focus groups and classes, questionnaire respondents had not necessarily been involved in CLIL or ESP.

3 Findings

3.1 Overview of the role of language in the CLIL context

The analysis of the internationalization and language policy documents shows a lack of a clearly defined policy on the integration of language and content and of the means by which students' language proficiency should be developed. All three white papers on teaching, internationalization and multilingualism stress the implementation of English-medium instruction to develop proficiency. For example, the Executive Teaching Plan aims at promoting "the progressive use of English as the medium of

instruction". From the definition of this strategic mission, which does not assign a specific role to language, it seems that the institutional definition of CLIL is that of “English-medium instruction”, rather than the integration of content and language. However, some awareness of the role of language appears in the explicit mention of assessing students' language production, although no further guidelines are given apart from the possibility of incorporating a language consultant.

3.1.1 Course documentation

The syllabi for the CLIL courses indicate what role language plays in them. As shown in Table 1, the three course syllabi include references to general communication skills, oral production skills and even theoretical ESP content in the Law course (“What is ESP? Why does it exist?” and ESP books, such as Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Table 1 Role of language in the syllabus of CLIL courses.		
Subject	Explicit objectives and language learning outcomes	Language support during CLIL classes
Accounting	Participate in class discussion and make presentations in English	None
Agronomy	Communicate in English, technical vocabulary & receptive and productive skills	Collaboration of PhD student/teaching innovation project on CLIL (2005–06 to 2007–08)
Law	ESP theory; reading comprehension and writing. Outcomes: writing & speaking (oral presentation)	None

Language support differed considerably between the three courses. *Accounting* was prepared and taught by content experts without a language consultant. *Law* was divided into two sections: a brief introduction to ESP and disciplinary law content. The ESP content was offered by a translator-lawyer (and part-time lecturer). Yet, no language support was offered to the content teachers by this language specialist to put the theoretical content into practice. *Agronomy* included the integration of language and content, derived from a previous team-teaching experience (Cots & Clemente, 2011).

The expected language learning outcomes varied greatly across the course syllabi. In *Accounting* there was no explicit language content or materials. Similarly, in *Law* the language content imparted at the beginning of the course was not put into practice in the disciplinary content. In contrast, in the *Agronomy* syllabus there were references to language content/skills related to the discipline, with the explicit course objective of developing both content and language knowledge (“The secondary objective is to improve your use of English as a technical and professional language”).

Therefore, as opposed to *Agronomy*, in the *Accounting* and *Law* courses, language development is either taken for granted as a result of attending classes in English, or else the language component is regarded as theory to be imparted.

3.2 Role of language in classroom observation

The *Accounting* and *Law* classes basically adopted a lecturing style. Consistent with the little attention paid to language in course descriptions, lecturers' discourse focused almost exclusively on content, with a few episodes focusing on language usually arising out of lecturers' (perceived) low proficiency level or from covert/overt comprehension breakdowns.

For example, both *Accounting* lecturers started their lessons by acknowledging their own linguistic limitations, one of the few references to language. In the extract below, the lecturer made herself available for repairs, reflecting a focus on language as the preview of possible comprehension problems. Moreover, she also admitted that her lack of proficiency and confidence in lecturing in English affected the class methodology and contributed to her use of group work.

L...Some of the activities that we are going to do today, we are going to do it in pairs, or in groups, ok?, because I will talk, of course, but I won't think that I could talk for two hours in English, ok? Because my level of English is what it is. And of course, if you have any problems un...understanding me, not only because of the vocabulary or the way that I am expressing in English, something or maybe if you have problems about what I am explaining because I don't explain it clearly or very well, so don't doubt to raise your hand and ask me any question that you have, ok? (*Accounting* Lecturer 1: 5.25–6.07)

In none of the Business lectures were there any instances of focus on form, consequently these classes do not show the integration of content and language. Business lecturers did not assume a language model role. However, they did aim to encourage students' English production, stressing that accuracy was not a concern.

L. I don't worry about how you write because I'm not going to XXX level of English because....You can express as you want. But you can express it in English! (*Accounting* Lecturer 1: 17.95–18.15)

Some inaccuracies were found in the lecturers' discourse, which often went unrepaired, as in the following example from *Accounting*:

L This is the relationship between economic growth and total [...] activity. okey/ **There are a correlation....Are you agree** with me/ (*Accounting* Lecturer 2: 9.05–9.21)

Lecturers also used compensation strategies, such as the occasional use of L1, or the careful planning of discourse with elaborated definitions and support material (e.g., PowerPoint).

The confirmation checks by the *Law* lecturer signalled overt communication breakdowns, as in the explanation below:

L ...between legal systems in the world/...is that clear/

S1 yes\

S2 no\

L the comparison between legal systems in the world

(*Law*: 21.44–22.07)

The richer interaction patterns in the *Agronomy* class, with student contributions, revealed overt communication breakdowns which led the content lecturer to deal with repairs, thus taking on a language model role. The example below shows how the lecturer asks the student for clarification, which leads to a repair exchange on the mispronunciation of <source>.

S: we need a high voltage +surs+\

L: high voltage/

S: +surs+\

L: +surs+ /

S: +surse+

L : + ah +/- source\

(*Agronomy*: 4.04–4.10)

A few focus-on-form episodes were produced in the four sessions, which reveal how lecturers' (self-perceived) proficiency influences their taking on a language modelling role. The *Agronomy* and *Law* lecturers took on a proactive language modelling role when comprehensibility was at risk. In contrast, the *Accounting* lecturers appeared to be less active in language modelling, congruent with their lower proficiency.

3.3 Participants' perceptions of CLIL from focus group discussions

In the focus groups on internationalization and multilingualism, this study examined participants' views and experience of CLIL programs. This section discusses the analysis of the transcripts of two sessions with lecturers and students, respectively.

3.3.1 Lecturers' perceptions

The analysis of the lecturers' focus group discussion yielded the following topics: the benefits and challenges of CLIL, especially regarding language proficiency; and the role of CLIL versus ESP.

3.3.1.1 Benefits and challenges of CLIL Lecturers mentioned the need to learn English as part of their academic career ("you suffer your first international conference"). In this sense, they welcomed CLIL as an opportunity "to bring English into [y]our daily lives". Motivation to learn English was the reason to engage in CLIL, considering that their participation was voluntary and that, despite being one of the university policy aims, CLIL is not supported by specific institutional measures or 'incentives'. As one of the lecturers put it: "I think that the institution has not put in the [necessary] resources, and, and I'm not, sometimes, I'm not talking about funding, eh, but incentives or things to engage people in doing [CLIL]". Examples of such incentives would be rewarding effort through the recognition of more credits, training and support in the preparation of teaching materials.

The language proficiency of both lecturers' and students' was perceived as the main challenge to CLIL implementation. Lecturers referred to the language demands that CLIL poses on students with quite specific comments. These included affective factors (anxiety or the "fear of English"), and the need for both language support and the gradual increase of language demands in CLIL courses (e.g., from reading comprehension questions to giving short presentations). Such comments reflect an awareness of language although, quite paradoxically, the integration of language was hardly made explicit in the classes. In the discussions lecturers also did not give language in CLIL a focal status; rather, it seems that language is seen as a pre-requisite for engaging in CLIL. They used the duality 'language learning' versus 'language use', whereby CLIL is considered an opportunity for authentic language use: "It's not so much that they [students] learn the language (although they learn technical vocabulary), but that they lose the fear of using the language, that they feel the need to use the language."

3.3.1.2 CLIL vs. ESP Lecturers referred to CLIL courses as a way for students to practice (discipline-related) English. Only in relation to the language requisite in the new degrees (i.e., students demonstrating FL competence) did a Business lecturer reflect on the presence of ESP courses, with a more favorable opinion towards CLIL than to ESP, as shown in the comments below:

"I think the way to introduce the third language is by doing a course in English, not what we're doing, which is doing English (i.e. ESP courses)"

"I think that with an English course we're not introducing this competence"

The presence of ESP in the curriculum (rather than CLIL) is justified by the lack of resources for implementing generalized CLIL programs, which would be a more desirable scenario. No further reasons are given to explain why CLIL is seen as more effective than ESP, although it should be noted that Business English courses are compulsory for all students while CLIL courses are chosen by a few motivated students who have enrolled voluntarily. From the discussion, it appears that the development of (academic) English proficiency is the result of imparting content courses in English, under the responsibility of content lecturers, while no references are made to ESP courses or to the collaboration of language specialists for the integration of language in content courses.

3.3.2 Students' perceptions

Students were interviewed in groups according to discipline (Business and Agronomy) and they provided insights into CLIL based on their experience. The topics that arose were CLIL implementation and the relationship between content and language.

3.3.2.1 Implementation of CLIL Like lecturers, students also articulated their motivation for taking CLIL courses. Their choice of a CLIL subject stems from their willingness to use English (although they acknowledged that they are not representative of the student population): "you like English, you want to learn... It's new". They showed positive views towards CLIL, expressing language benefits like specific vocabulary/discourse, the development of fluency, and losing their fear of speaking in public.

Students considered that the implementation of CLIL cannot be imposed, and that it is a requirement that lecturers be prepared to teach in English, by which they mean the lecturers should exhibit language proficiency. Regarding lecturers' proficiency, Agronomy students believed that the lecturers spoke good English but with an accent (which they considered an ancillary issue). In general, students expected CLIL lecturers to have a higher level of English than that of the students and anticipated them acting as language models by correcting students, for example. These views coincide with the class observations, in which the Agronomy lecturer acted as a model and repaired students' contributions.

The students' general low proficiency levels may lead to a double barrier for CLIL: the "need to understand English and complex subject matter". Referring to their experience, Business students noted hardly any comprehension problems, although this particular course was however a review of concepts seen in previous courses, so they would have had the opportunity to practice English (asking questions and giving a presentation at the end of the course). Although CLIL is regarded as a means to learn English, Agronomy students made it clear that they were not willing to sacrifice content for the sake of language learning: "You need to become an engineer, not a «half-engineer» with English – you can learn English outside university, but not calculus."

3.3.2.2 Relationship between content and language Language proficiency is a recurrent topic. When reporting on their CLIL experience, students referred to language help with classes prepared to minimize comprehension difficulties. This remark coincides with the classroom data as, for example, the *Accounting* classes observed included detailed visual support. Agronomy students mentioned that the lecturer used a combination of materials in Catalan and English.

Students referred to strategies for overcoming language problems, like L1 use, or making definitions for comprehensibility: "when there was a doubt we tried to understand each other, looking for definitions because we couldn't find the word". These remarks reflect their awareness that language is a concern. Despite valuing CLIL as a space of communication in English, they admitted that their classes did not spur genuine communication, as an authentic scenario should include foreign participants. Because of their shared L1, they did not have to make an effort for comprehensibility or strive for accuracy. They fell back on the L1 as shortcuts to communication:

"What I probably found most difficult was when we gave the oral presentation. Speaking in front of the class and expressing yourself well, as you knew they understood you perfectly. Well if you said something in Catalan [code-switching/mixing], well, they understood you."

In relation to language development, they discussed the roles and positions of both CLIL and ESP courses. In particular, the Business students interviewed had taken both types of courses, which allowed them to compare *Accounting* and *Business English*. They referred to ESP classes as being hard for students, even though they considered them to be at the same level as English courses at secondary school:

"because the English [ESP course] we did in the second year, well, which is almost what we did in secondary school, and people found it difficult, the thing is if we're doing a university [course] in English and it's the same as secondary school, and people find it difficult, how can we move on?"

This reference to a general low proficiency level indicates a major challenge for CLIL implementation on a wide scale. Comparing CLIL and ESP courses, students characterized language courses as grammar, as opposed to the communicative focus of CLIL courses which are related to their discipline and where language mistakes are not penalized. For these students, CLIL would be a way to encourage students to improve their English, which is something that would happen "if the lecturer said at the start of the course, come on, now, bibliography in English, and now the class will be in English".

Thus with CLIL, language demands come from subject-matter communication rather than from a language course. Other comments, however, suggested the need for language support. This brief reference to "short courses" seems to point to an adjunct or theme-based model, with language instruction closely linked to content:

"Of course, that is the point, for those who did English, English classes, grammar or that... for example we do short courses, but in a class, the same as for "Accounting", a class of "marketing", in English, we'll do a short course..."

Therefore, students' comments on content and language point to some challenges for CLIL (mainly low proficiency), as well as to some possibilities for their integration based on the use of English for genuine communicative needs related to their discipline.

3.4 General views on CLIL expressed through a questionnaire

Another source of data for lecturers' and students' perceptions was the one open-ended question included in the general questionnaire on internationalization and multilingualism which asked them to: "Evaluate the introduction of courses taught in English and French at UdL through the "Multilingual Plan" (not language courses, but courses taught in these foreign languages)".

This section starts with the demographics of the questionnaire to contextualize the position of CLIL and ESP courses at the UdL. This is followed by the qualitative analysis of the open question on CLIL. The lecturers' and students' opinions also reveal their concerns about CLIL, which parallel the topics in the focus groups: the relationship between CLIL and ESP; the evaluation of CLIL and ESP experience; and the conditions for CLIL implementation. Although the open question explicitly excluded language courses, some participants referred to ESP which provided valuable information on the relationship between language and content.

As general background information, we found that 53.9% of students ($n = 745$) had ESP experience, while 14% had experience in LSP (in languages other than English), and only 10% had CLIL experience. Although the questionnaire results did not distinguish respondents with or without CLIL experience, specific references to CLIL experience were found in some of the answers. Regarding lecturers ($n = 68$), 11.8% of them reported on CLIL experience (45.6% reported no experience and 42.6% did not answer the question). These figures confirm that CLIL is a new phenomenon in the institution and that there is a tradition of ESP.



3.4.1 Relationship between CLIL and ESP

In general, lecturers' and students' answers are positive towards CLIL. Apart from the arguments related to language practice/learning and internationalization, some students considered CLIL as an induction into the discipline. In this sense, one of the views that emerged is a definition of CLIL as a kind of ESP:


"It's positive for students as this is the language required in today's labor market, so it's important to learn it and it's good to have classes in English so that students can improve their knowledge of English and in the technical aspects of their discipline." [S. 157]

The prospects of implementing CLIL are embraced with enthusiasm on the grounds that it is a way of learning discipline-related language, an area that in principle would be covered by discipline-specific ESP. Largely coinciding with the views expressed in the discussions, lecturers also remarked that CLIL should be favored instead of ESP, with the argument of 'learning by doing'; as CLIL is perceived as a context for real communication. These views, reflected in the extract below, probably stem from a stereotyped view of language courses as not communicative. The distinction between "didactic" and "applied" courses is quite revealing, as it most likely refers to CLIL versus ESP:

"It is positive, a didactic course is not the same as an applied course, where students face a "real" use of the language in question." [L. 16]

These opinions contrast with those expressed by some students  probably reflecting their concern that lack of language proficiency might hinder academic performance  which suggest that language courses (i.e., ESP) should be introduced to complement content classes taught in English:

"I think that it is the best way to learn a language with a kind of "linguistic immersion". But it would also be necessary to offer language courses to learn it well." [S. 8]

This answer suggests a scenario that promotes the  disciplinary integration of language and content, but without assuming that language is learnt from mere exposure to classes in English. From these favorable views towards CLIL implementation, some lessons can be derived for ESP teaching: heightened student motivation (out of the perception that learning English is essential), and an ESP model closely linked to discipline-specific content and practices.

On the other hand, some students argued against implementing CLIL because of students' (and to a lesser extent, lecturers') lack of proficiency, which hinders academic performance. The following comment refers to this increased difficulty and clearly separates language learning from content learning by suggesting the incorporation of language courses (i.e., ESP) rather than courses taught in English:

"I don't think [CLIL] it's a good option, since learning and understanding contents is already difficult in your own language, teaching content through English (you don't have such a good command) would even be more difficult. I think we should practice English in language courses rather than [in] other courses." [S. 188]

3.4.2 Evaluation of CLIL and ESP experience

The general views above provide insights into how content and language can be approached. More specifically, from the students' reports of their CLIL or ESP experience we can derive considerations for ESP planning and teaching. From the figures presented at the beginning of this section, only a few participants had had experience of CLIL, whereas about half of the students had had experience of ESP.

Some of the students who made evaluative comments about CLIL expressed mixed perceptions of their experience. Positive comments referred to the opportunity to “improve language and culture” [S: 376], while others reported a negative experience, due to their proficiency level: “The level was too low for those of us with a certain level of English, but too high for those who don’t know the language” [S. 389]. Another student provided a detailed account of his/her experience in the *Accounting* course, raising a series of topics, relating to the relationship between classes in English, internationalization, and English as an academic lingua franca. This comment also evaluates lecturers’ language skills as rather low, but sets the transmission of content as the priority over language:

“(…) I have found that all lecturers are totally capable to have class in English and they are experts of the topics they teach. On the other hand, in the “Accounting” course there are teachers from FDE [School of Law and Business] who do not speak English so well, they make grammatical mistakes. But in my opinion it is not so important –everyone makes mistakes– but what matters is that they are able to explain the subject matter to students. I think that an international university is not about grammatical knowledge. It is about skills to share vocational knowledge between lecturers from more than one country and students from more than one country.” [S. 696]

On the other hand, most of the comments on ESP courses are neutral, simply stating that students had taken one of the courses. However, there are a few hints that suggest that language courses at university should be adapted. As shown in the comments above, CLIL is regarded as a context for language learning and real communication in the discipline. As this is an area that one could expect to be covered by ESP, we wondered what views of language classes participants had. Among all the answers only two evaluative comments could be found about previous ESP courses and they were rather negative, referring to the use of “traditional methodology” and to their similarity to secondary school language courses. These are only incidental comments precisely because the open question explicitly excluded LSP courses. Therefore, in a further study participants should be asked to give a more detailed account of their views of ESP courses in order to find out what initiatives can be suggested by ESP specialists to promote discipline-specific communication.

3.4.3 Conditions for the implementation of CLIL

As noted above, despite some enthusiastic views on CLIL, other responses are cautious about its implementation, suggesting that certain conditions should be met like providing language support. The following two comments (by a student and a lecturer) reflect this need. The student suggests that a language course should precede content courses taught in English, whereas the lecturer reflects on her ability to teach in English and how it would affect the overall quality of her teaching:

“I think it’s quite a radical change, as in secondary school the level was not high, and here it’s very difficult. I think there should be an English language course and little by little introduce it [the English language] in different courses.” [S. 40]

“I consider it [CLIL] very positive, but as far as I know it is scarce. I think the main obstacle is that most lecturers, including myself, are not fluent enough to do it well. I mean, we can plunge into it, but our level is not high enough to guarantee the same teaching quality. Besides, we don’t have anyone to help us correct our mistakes. It would be a good idea to have a language support person while we’re doing our classes in English so that at the end we could evaluate it and correct the errors.” [L. 43]

These two comments point to the need for a principled approach to CLIL based on the integration of language and content in different ways. The student suggests offering separate language and content courses (with the gradual integration of language). The lecturer, on the other hand, seems to draw on her experience and suggests a very specific type of collaboration from the ESP side, as a language adjunct. Opportunities for LSP collaboration thus can be derived in different formats: separate ESP courses as a preparation for further courses taught in English; gradually integrate content and language in content courses; or provide language consultancy/support for content lecturers teaching in English.

4 Discussion and implications

The findings show, first, that the UdL is starting to offer English-medium instruction for internationalization and language development in line with current trends on CLIL (Wächter & Maiworm, 2008). Although institutional policies mention the role of language and the integration of language and content, there are no specific guidelines or proposals for integrating ESP into this new pedagogical model. This lack of clearly defined policies is reflected in the practices analyzed in this study. Regarding the first research question, the role and status of ESP and CLIL vary across degrees, with some grassroots initiatives for CLIL courses and an unequal presence of ESP courses. From the documents and views analyzed, it seems that there is a shift from ESP to CLIL, which is seen as a means of increasing exposure to English and developing language proficiency. The courses observed show a variety of approaches to CLIL with different levels for the inclusion of language support. In the *Law* and *Accounting* courses, language learning outcomes are basically expected from exposure to content lectures. The *Law* course includes an attempt to integrate ESP into the course, but with a focus on ESP theory and without having sought the collaboration of ESP specialists. On the other hand, the Business degree includes both content courses in English and ESP courses, although they are independently taught by lecturers from different departments. The *Agronomy* course, based on the collaboration between a content lecturer and a language specialist, can be classified as an adjunct course with explicit language learning objectives and outcomes.

To answer the second research question, on the role of language in CLIL courses, the documents and classroom observation data are fairly consistent; that is, hardly any language focus was found in the *Accounting* classes, with a course syllabus that did not list language objectives. Therefore, in lectures the focus was on content, with hardly any focus on language. Any communication breakdowns remained covert, as lecturers’ inaccuracies often went unrepaired. On the other hand, in the *Law* class, with a lecturer who felt more confident in his command of English, there were language episodes addressed to overcoming communication breakdowns. This scant attention to language confirms the results of previous studies of content classes (Airey, 2012; Dafouz-Milne, 2011). Cots (2013) argues that this lack of attention to language lies not only in lecturers’ low levels of proficiency, but also in a lack of training in language teaching, which would, in turn, involve a lack of language awareness.

In contrast to incidental, remedial attention to language in *Law* and *Accounting*, the *Agronomy* course contained richer interaction patterns and a greater focus on language. Although all courses were taught by content lecturers alone, the *Agronomy* lecturer drew on a syllabus and classroom practices that had been prepared in collaboration with a language specialist. This exemplifies a possible collaboration with ESP experts, paving the ground for incorporating language instruction into content courses and sensitizing content specialists towards language. It should be remembered that this collaboration was an exceptional effort arising from a specific, funded project. If this model were to be implemented on a large scale, it would need clear guidelines and support. The lack of attention to language in the *Law* and *Accounting* classes, due to a lack of systematicity in the former, and low levels of proficiency and awareness in the latter contrasts with the systematic integration of content and language in the *Agronomy* course, which points to some lessons that can inspire discipline-specific and ESP collaboration. From the adjunct model exemplified in the *Agronomy* class, questions could be raised on the reappraisal of ESP lecturers' roles. They could either move to an adjunct position in content courses or supervise specially appointed language and pedagogy advisors/coaches (the latter option has started to be considered by the recently created Language Institute at the UdL). Such options need to be carefully studied and they open up questions related to ESP faculty roles and status, as well as the economic feasibility of the latter option.

The third research question refers to lecturers' and students' views on the implementation of CLIL. Both focus groups and questionnaires show a certain enthusiasm towards CLIL, perceived as a real communicative context for discipline-oriented language use. This view contrasts with that on ESP courses, which are seen as traditional language courses and not communicative or discipline-based. These views of ESP lead to the question of whether such perceptions respond to stereotyped views of what language teaching is or to the conditions of implementation of CLIL and ESP courses. It may be the case that the ESP courses offered are not connected to discipline content, following the traditional distinction between departments. Among the lessons to be learnt from the ESP/EAP side is the need to revise and update ESP/EAP courses (Foran-Storer, 2007) to make them more communicative, discipline-specific and student-centered.

Despite institutional policies towards CLIL and instructors' and students' enthusiasm, CLIL implementation is regarded at present as an insurmountable obstacle, left to the goodwill and effort of content lecturers who often have to deal with low proficiency levels (generally that of students, but also often their own). The CLIL situation raises the question of whether content is sacrificed for the sake of language (a concern expressed by participants) and also foregrounds the need to develop systematic approaches to CLIL that incorporate language support. Although CLIL practices are seen as an opportunity to develop English proficiency, participants also miss the need to strive for accuracy, which they attribute to the absence of international students in class. On the other hand, the non-focal status of language in CLIL classes is perceived as an opportunity to communicate with a low level of anxiety and to focus solely on content (Maillat, 2010). From these perceptions, some lessons can be learnt for the reappraisal of ESP courses, such as making them more communicative and discipline or project-based, so that students feel the need to communicate in English to accomplish meaningful tasks.

All in all, the present movement towards CLIL opens up new challenges for ESP lecturers. In CLIL courses there is ample room for collaboration in language development: from designing ESP/EAP courses adapted to the disciplines to collaborating with content lecturers through to an adjunct model. The successful case of the integration of language and content in *Agronomy* could be extended to other courses and disciplines, while the presence of CLIL and ESP courses in Business Studies paves the way for discipline and ESP lecturers to overcome departmental barriers and collaborate. Both types of courses could be more closely related to offer students a balanced approach to content and language. If ESP courses are to be seen as meaningful and necessary, needs analysis has to be reinstated at the center of course design—one of the "key stages in ESP" according to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998).

5 Conclusions

This article has brought to the fore institutional policies, practices, and views on language learning at a Spanish university. Although it is only a snapshot of a single institution, the triangulation of different types of data (documents, classes, and participants' perspectives) has yielded a general picture of institutional policies on and practices of CLIL, both of which have implications for ESP. Policy documentation stresses the importance of language competence for graduates, without providing clear institutional guidelines and support. It also appears contradictory that the ESP/LSP tradition in the institution is not exploited or that the expertise of language departments is only exceptionally sought. No matter how enthusiastic policy makers and prospective participants are towards CLIL, a systematic approach is necessary to design, implement and assess the 'L' for language in CLIL, for which the collaboration of ESP/LSP experts can be valuable. Under these circumstances, despite their unequal presence in the curricula, ESP courses provide an opportunity for awareness-raising and for the development of the necessary academic literacies to cope with the demands of CLIL (see Terraschke & Wahid, 2011). However, ESP specialists should design courses that challenge stereotypical views by focusing on specialized discipline content and meeting specific needs. Some proposals have been made in this paper on an adjunct ESP model in content courses and the design of ESP courses informed by stakeholders' needs.

Despite this movement towards CLIL, we have seen that there is not always a true integration of content and language, but rather that students are expected to develop their proficiency either as a requirement for participation in CLIL or by mere exposure to the foreign language. Institutional policies should be translated into opportunities for the collaboration between content and ESP lecturers (as proposed by Räisänen, 2009) to develop coherent CLIL programs that address the language needs of both lecturers and students. In contexts where, as mentioned above, ESP appears 'fragile', there is room for making proposals from the ESP perspective, especially where institutional policies are not yet sufficiently developed. Collaboration across departments for situated, discipline-specific learning, such as those proposed by Gustafsson et al. (2011) based on a change of perspective for both discipline and language lecturers, can lead to a mutually enriching partnership. Despite all the risks and challenges involved, the rapidly evolving CLIL-scenario can be seen as an opportunity to engage in greater multidisciplinary, an activity which, after all, is the very essence of ESP.

Uncited reference

Brinton and Holten, 2001; University of Lleida, 2010; Wächter, 2008.

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Footnotes

²For details on the Bologna process see: http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/bologna_en.htm.

³This research forms part of a broader research project focusing on multilingualism and higher education in higher education and study abroad, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (ref. FFI2008-00585/FILO) and the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (ref. FFI2012-35834).

⁴The Common European Framework of Languages is an initiative by the European Council to design a transparent system for describing levels of language proficiency as an aid for language teaching and assessment: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp.

⁵Although CLIL in our context is basically interpreted by most people as English (by far the most commonly taught/used language), university policy documents refer to a “third language” (given that this is a bilingual community), thus not excluding other languages. For this reason, the question in the survey explicitly adds French, which is the other LSP offered at the university.

Highlights

- Shift from ESP to CLIL courses in curricula.
- Policy stresses foreign language competence, but no institutional support is provided.

- Collaboration with ESP teachers in language development is needed in CLIL courses.
 - Reappraisal of ESP courses: more oriented towards discipline communication needs.
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Queries and Answers

Query: The citation 'Räsänen & Fortanet, 2008' has been changed to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check, and correct if necessary.

Answer: Please, follow the attachment for answers.

Query: One parenthesis has been added to balance the delimiters. Please check that this was done correctly, and amend if necessary.

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Query: Note that of the two sets of Table 1 provided, we have followed the Table that has been provided separately in the doc 'Table 1.docx'. Please check, and correct if necessary.

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Query: If possible, please provide doi/web link for all references available online/magazines/newspapers

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Query: As per the journal style, For more than 7 authors/editors; list upto 6 authors/editors and then a hellip and then the last author/editor name. Hence, please provide names of all the authors/editors for references "Airey, 2012; Cots, 2013; Cots and Clemente, 2011; Crandall and Kaufman, 2002; Dafouz-Milne, 2011; Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010; Foran-Storer, 2007; Maillat, 2010; Räsänen, 2009; Räsänen and Fortanet-Gómez, 2008".

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Answer: Please, follow the attachment for answers.

Query: Please confirm that given names and surnames have been identified correctly.

Answer: Please, follow the attachment for answers.